Leona Decker

June 6, 1926 ~ February 1, 2014

Leona Decker passed away February 1, 2014 of natural causes at the Sarah Daft Home. She was intelligent, strong, witty, creative, compassionate, beautiful, curious, humorous and progressive for her time. She is survived by Delores Simons, Nancy Heiner, Cal and Laura Boardman, Sheila Gorder, David, Anthony, and Ben Jenkinson, Sofia Gorder Framme, and Giselle Gorder Unger.

Leona was born June 6, 1926 in Cheyenne Wyoming to Elmer Decker and Edna Skalitzky Decker. Upon her graduation in 1943 from East High of Salt Lake City, Leona was an accomplished lyric soprano singer and lover of classical music. Sound and color were her life links and her home was always filled music. Her favorite composers were Mozart and Beethoven.

Leona, while understated in her dress and attitude was stunningly and delicately beautiful. At age 17, a noted photographer named Walt Lillian found Leona. He saw promise in her beauty, and so it was, Leona had a modeling career from1940-46. She went on to study English Literature in College and soon met Mert Draper at Daynes music store where she was employed. Mert was a musician too who came in to buy sheet music. The two music lovers wed shortly thereafter. Their first child, Laura was born in 1949 and Sheila in 1952.

In 1966 Leona graduated with a nursing degree at the Salt Lake Community College. She worked as a nurse for 20 years in labor, delivery, pediatrics, and on the psyche ward. She was known for her compassion when helping patients.

Leona was an avid lover of all the arts not only because she loved each discipline but also because she believed in the importance of exploring authentic self expression. Throughout her life she was remembered by her music, writing, poetry and painting. She loved Halloween because she could play with her grandchildren by creating fabulous costumes, face paintings, and characters. She taught art to children and adults at her kitchen table for a decade, and was always interested in facilitating the creativity of others.

Leona loved nature and spent time exploring the outdoors. She loved biking, hiking, riding horses, and plane-gliding. Her grandchildren will remember picnics, hikes, and scavenger hunts in nature.

When asked what she felt her greatest accomplishment was, she replied, "being a mother". Leona gifted us all with her love of music, nature, beauty and freedom. She taught us how to surrender to laughter. She inspired imagination and insisted life was a personal adventure. She taught us about freedom of thought and action while also modeling compassion and tenderness.

Please join us in the Celebration of Her Life at the Memorial House at the mouth of Memory Grove, Sunday February 23rd from 12:00-2:00. Open House with live music, light fare, spirits, and memories that should make for a beautiful afternoon.